

**“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
July 13, 2016**

1 Samuel 22:1–23:29. Birds of a feather flock together.

1 Peter 1:13–19. Being and doing “good” (ἀγαθόν) concurrent/virtue style (non-conduit).

Psalms 123:1–124:8. Eternal perspective and suffering.

COMMENTS:

1 Samuel 22:1–23:29. Distress can unite people who may not be in a present friendly relationship. In difficult moments, in shared pain and difficulties, many come together as a family, as well as often discover true friends. When David fled from King Saul, his divided family was suddenly supportive of him, as was every man in the region who was distressed (**1 Sam 22:1–2**). All of David’s family joined him at the cave, which meant that his brothers deserted Saul’s army and became fugitives like David. They knew that David was God’s anointed king, so they linked up with the future of the nation. Many others saw in David the only hope for a successful kingdom, so they came to him as well. Many were discontented because of the way Saul was ruining the nation. A shared sense of despair often reveals the humanity in us all, helping us to get past our disputes and work together for one purpose. For a disjointed band of brothers to be united beyond initial circumstance, they must have one purpose. That’s precisely what David gave his motley crew: They would fight the Philistines, Israel’s greatest enemies, together (**1 Sam 23:1–5**). David took a terrible situation and turned it into an opportunity to do what needed to be done. As rightful king, David was obligated to protect Israel. Yet it still took outstanding courage and raw leadership to act upon that obligation. When most people would have been paralyzed by fear, David was prepared for action—and that marked him as Israel’s new leader. David’s strength in adversity enabled him to unite people for a cause, and his God-centered focus made him the ideal leader of God’s people. We also see the principle that men tend to follow, or flock around, those who are like them. David was a man of integrity and those who appreciated and aspired to virtue/goodness gathered around him. Doeg, the Edomite, on the other hand, loved evil (see Psalm 52) and so attracted people of his ilk, i.e., as a scheming leader he attracted scheming followers—birds of a feather flock together. Doeg’s people will do anything to gain their leader’s approval and receive his rewards. Moreover, this was the perfect time for Doeg to use his knowledge to please the king and raise his own stature before the other officers. The fact that he was accusing God’s anointed king didn’t bother him, or that he lied about what the high priest said and did. It is no wonder that David despised Doeg and expressed his loathing in Psalm 52. Another principle we see in this section is that dishonest people both berate others and cannot trust others (because they think others think like they do). Notice how Saul berates his officers, all of whom were from his own tribe of Benjamin. Always suspicious of treachery in the official ranks, Saul reminded the men that he was king and therefore was the only one who could reward them for their faithful service. David attracted men who were willing to risk their lives for him, but Saul had to use bribery and fear to keep his forces together. Saul was sure that his officers were conspiring against him because they had refused to tell him that David and Jonathan had covenanted together concerning the kingdom. **In chapter 23** we see David as the deliverer. He delivers Keilah (border town in Judah) from the Philistines in the **first six verses**, and in verses **7-29** David delivers himself and his men from

Saul. We get more insight into David's encounter with Saul in Psalm 54 where he prayed for vindication from the Lord. David knew that the flatterers in Saul's official circle, people like Doeg, were telling lies about him and making it look as though David wanted to kill the king. These fawning toadies were hoping to be rewarded by Saul, but they only went down in defeat because they gave allegiance to the wrong king. Leaders who enjoy flattery and praise, and who encourage and reward associates who seek only to gratify their leader's ego, can never build other leaders or accomplish the will of God to the glory of God. David developed officers who were "mighty men" (1 Chron. 21; 2 Sam. 24), but Saul attracted officers who were moral weaklings, thus without moral virtue as virtue is always about power or strength for *goodness*: good intellect, good will, and good affections, that is: right thinking, right desires, and right feelings, as we have been studying at Faith Bible Church, a place where many great believers come together to grow in the Whole Truth as such. God has blessed me with the fellowship of such great believers as congregants and friends. I am a better man because of that fellowship.

1 Peter 1:13–19. Note the contrast between the "lusts" of the flesh (sense appetites) of unbelievers and the Christian calling to be of exceptional character in verses **13-14**. Instead of capitulating to evil desires of the flesh, believers are to live holy/good lives. The pattern for holiness is God himself, who is unremittingly *good!* This *call to goodness* is one of the distinctive emphases throughout 1 Peter. Note the repeated emphases on *goodness/virtue*: **1 Peter 2:12**, *having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your **good works** (τῶν καλῶν ἔργων) which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.*¹³ *Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme,*¹⁴ *or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those **who do good** (ἀγαθοποιῶν).*¹⁵ *For this is the will of God, that by **doing good** (ἀγαθοποιῶντες) you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men--* **1 Peter 2:20** *For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when **you do good** (ἀγαθοποιῶντες) and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.* **1 Peter 3:6** *as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you **do good** (ἀγαθοποιῶσαι) and are not afraid with any terror.* **1 Peter 3:11** *Let him turn away from evil and **do good** (ἀγαθόν) ; Let him seek peace and pursue it.* **1 Peter 3:13** *And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is **good** (τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ) ?* **1 Peter 3:17** *For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for **doing good** (ἀγαθοποιῶντες) than for doing evil.* **1 Peter 4:19** *Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in **doing good** (ἀγαθοποιῶν), as to a faithful Creator.* Of course *doing good* is all about virtue: right thinking (intellect), right desires (will), and right feelings (right affections and emotions). Note what is missing in all of these mandates: some conduit system of being confessed up so that one is in a state of automatically producing divine good as per some *deus ex machina* type of spirituality. The modern spiritual conduit system is but a result of the *infection of modern philosophy* into God's Holy Word. We are all held accountable to be faithful to God's Word as such (cf., Heb. 4:13; 2 Tim. 4:17). What will believers say at the Judgment Seat of Christ when Jesus Christ asks them why in the world would they think they could just inject a 1 John 1:9-conduit-spiritual system into all of these passages, and virtually every passage containing any positive command of God with the effect of teaching that as long as one is confessed up, he will be a conduit for the Holy Spirit to produce divine good. How in the world could the Holy Spirit produce *good* when the *good* is dependent upon *my* right thinking, right wishing (motives), and right feelings rather than me being like wire

that electricity runs through? How does such power change *my* attitude without destroying *my own thinking and desires* and thus my free will and hence my humanity? We are neither wires nor robots. Next, note the exceptional character demanded of Christians: The holiness of the Christian life is to match that of God, who “called” (*kalesanta*) us to Himself. As Peter says in **1 Peter 2:9**, God calls people “*out of darkness into his wonderful light.*” Calling does not merely mean “invite” but conveys the idea of God’s power in bringing people from darkness to light. Just as God’s call creates light when there was darkness, so He creates life where there was death. The command to be holy indicates that the pilgrim people of God (1 Peter 1:1; 2:11) are to live differently. They are to separate themselves from the evil desires of the world and live in a way that pleases God. One of the first steps is to recognize that all sins are acts of perversion in the intellect, will, and affections. While modernism makes light of sin, “everyone does it . . . nobody is perfect . . . we are all sinners, so it is no big deal,” because it does not want to offend modern man, the Bible nowhere treats sin as anything but perversion and filth. To see sin as ugly and perverse, as the Bible sees it, goes a long way of taking the shine or appearance of goodness off of sin, which then gives us capacity to love God as our good instead of seeing Him, consciously or unconsciously, as a threat to some “good” in sin. As we have noted, we sin because of some perceived good in the sin. Seeing sin for what it is *also* goes a long way to avoid the error of some “grace oriented believers” who see God as a handy grace dispenser. Such a perverted way of thinking is self-destructive and such a believer never really grows in grace or knowledge of the Lord as evidenced by persistent foul thinking, foul desires, and foul feelings. Only by actualizing the good in concurrence with God does the believer really grow in grace, a growth in experiential sanctification, which just is a growth in holiness that Peter mentions, which just is a grow in right thoughts, right desires, and right affections according to the holiness of God that called us into a whole new life, a life of peace and real satisfaction due to an intellect and will that are rightly ordered to God and what is truly good—the true, good, and beautiful.

Psalm 123:1–124:8. While the New Testament has far greater focus on the eternal perspective than the Old Testament, due to the fact that the Christian inheritance just is Jesus in the next life whereas the Old Testament believer was promised an earthly inheritance in addition to the Heavenly Jerusalem (Heb. 11), note the eternal perspective in the first verses of **Psalm 123** as the psalmist described his focus on God and His throne during persecution, which is described in this rest of this psalm and in **Psalm 124**. In **Psalm 123** the psalm looks to God’s throne (**123:1**), God’s hand (**123:2**), and God’s mercy and grace (**123:3-4**). In Psalm 124, he describes his life of being persecuted and how God always protects him. He is thankful and so are we. One of the most wonderful things in life is to reflect on how the Lord has faithfully taken care of us throughout our brief lifespan. Reflect and be thankful is always appropriate and goes a long way to gaining the proper perspective.

Romans 11:36 For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

Pastor Don